

HUMANITIES 4:
LECTURES 15-17
KANT'S ETHICS

METHOD & QUESTIONS

- PURPOSE AND METHOD:
 - TRANSITION FROM COMMON SENSE TO PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MORALITY
 - ANALYSIS OF EVERYDAY MORAL CONCEPTS
- MAIN QUESTIONS:
 - WHAT IS UNCONDITIONALLY GOOD?
 - WHICH ACTIONS HAVE MORAL WORTH?
 - WHAT ARE OUR MORAL DUTIES? (WHAT TO DO?)
 - WHAT IS OF VALUE IN THE WORLD?

ANSWERS TO MAIN QS

- **ANSWERS:**
 - **GOOD WILL (INTENTIONS, PRINCIPLES, CHARACTER)**
 - **WHAT MAKES IT GOOD? NOT CONSEQUENCES**
 - **ACTIONS DONE FROM DUTY HAVE MORAL WORTH**
 - **NOT FROM INCLINATIONS**
 - **CONTENT OF MORALITY: CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE**
 - **NOT HYPOTHETICAL IMPERATIVES**
 - **BASIC VALUE: HUMANITY/RATIONALITY/AUTONOMY**

GROUNDWORK I

● WHAT MIGHT ONE THINK IS UNCONDITIONALLY GOOD?

1. TALENTS OF THE MIND

- INTELLIGENCE, WIT, JUDGMENT (SUPERPOWERS)

2. TEMPERAMENT

- COURAGE, PERSEVERANCE (IMMORTALITY)

3. GIFTS OF FORTUNE

- POWER, MONEY, HAPPINESS (POWER, MONEY, WELLBEING)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

ARE ALL OF THESE GOODS UNCONDITIONALLY GOOD?

● I.E., ARE THESE GOODS GOOD IN EVERY CONTEXT?

1. TALENTS OF THE MIND

- CAN BE HARMFUL IF WILL IS NOT GOOD.

2. TEMPERAMENT

- COOLNESS OF VILLAIN MAKES VILLAIN WORSE.

3. GIFTS OF FORTUNE

- POWER OBVIOUSLY DEPENDS ON ONE'S WILL.
- MONEY CAN BE PUT TO BAD USE.
- HAPPINESS, IF NOT DESERVED, IS NOT GOOD.
 - CONDITION OF BEING WORTHY OF HAPPINESS.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD WILL GOOD?

- ITS INTRINSIC GOODNESS
 - ANTI-CONSEQUENTIALIST
 - NOT EFFECTS/CONSEQUENCES
 - NOT FITNESS IN ATTAINING SOME OTHER END
 - WHY? IT IS BETTER THAN WHAT IT MIGHT CAUSE.
 - GOOD, EVEN IF ONE'S WILL IS INEFFECTUAL.
 - "IT WOULD, LIKE A JEWEL, STILL SHINE"
 - "ITS USEFULNESS OR FRUITLESSNESS CAN NEITHER AUGMENT NOR DIMINISH ITS VALUE"

WHICH ACTIONS HAVE MORAL WORTH?

- CONCEPT OF DUTY INCLUDES CONCEPT OF GOOD WILL
- ACTIONS CONTRARY TO DUTY HAVE NO MORAL WORTH
- ACTIONS IN MERE CONFORMITY TO DUTY HAVE NO MW
 - NO IMMEDIATE INCLINATION
 - SHOPKEEPER
 - IMMEDIATE INCLINATION
 - SELF-PRESERVATION
- ACTIONS FROM DUTY
 - AGAINST INCLINATION?
 - WHY? OTHERWISE, ONLY CONTINGENT CONNECTION

WHY DO THEY HAVE MW?

- “AN ACTION FROM DUTY HAS ITS MORAL WORTH NOT IN THE PURPOSE TO BE ATTAINED BY IT, BUT IN THE MAXIM IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHICH IT IS DECIDED ON”
 - AGAIN, NOT EFFECTS, BUT PRINCIPLE OF VOLITION
 - MOTIVATIONS, NOT RESULTS
- DEFINITION OF DUTY: “THE NECESSITY OF AN ACTION DONE FROM RESPECT FOR LAW”
 - “RESPECT” FOR LAW VS. SATISFACTION OF DESIRE
 - DESIRES COULD BE SATISFIED WITHOUT RAT. WILL
 - BUT WHAT IS “LAW” FOR WHICH WE HAVE RESPECT?

CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

- K DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN HYPOTHETICAL AND CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVES.
- HIS DERIVE NORMATIVE FORCE FROM INCENTIVE/END
 - IF YOU WANT X, THEN YOU SHOULD DO Y.
 - CIS DO NOT.
 - DO NOT DO X. (PERIOD)
- MORAL DUTIES AND LAW ARE EXPRESSED WITH CIs.

FIRST FORMULATION OF CI

“ACT ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT MAXIM THROUGH WHICH YOU CAN AT THE SAME TIME WILL THAT IT BECOME A UNIVERSAL LAW” (OR A LAW OF NATURE)

- DON'T MAKE AN EXCEPTION OF YOURSELF
- PROCESS:
 - TAKE MAXIM
 - UNIVERSALIZE (WHAT IF EVERYONE DID IT?)
 - IS IT CONSISTENT? (IF NOT, THEN IT'S IMMORAL.)
 - IF SO, CAN ONE STILL WILL IT? (IF NOT, ...)

FOUR EXAMPLES (2X2)

- 1. AND 2. SUICIDE AND FALSE PROMISE
 - UNIVERSALIZED MAXIM: END LIFE OR MAKE FALSE PROMISE FROM SELF-LOVE
 - CONTRADICTION (CLEAREST IN PROMISING CASE)
- 3. AND 4. UNDEVELOPED TALENTS AND BENEFICENCE
 - UNIVERSALIZED MAXIM: NEGLECT TALENTS FOR PLEASURE OR LET EACH PERSON HELP HIMSELF
 - CONSISTENT, BUT NOT WILLABLE (ESP. BENEF.)

SECOND FORMULATION

“SO ACT THAT YOU USE HUMANITY, WHETHER IN YOUR OWN PERSON OR IN THE PERSON OF ANY OTHER, ALWAYS AT THE SAME TIME AS AN END, NEVER MERELY AS A MEANS”

- HUMANS ARE NOT THINGS. (DIGNITY VS. PRICE)
 - DON'T USE THEM, RESPECT THEM.
- EXAMPLES:
 - SUICIDE AND NEGLECTING YOUR TALENTS: USE YOURSELF AS A MEANS
 - FALSE PROMISE AND BENEFICENCE: USE OTHERS

2ND FORMULATION CONT.

- HUMANITY FORMULATION
 - NOT MERELY NEGATIVE: POSITIVE HARMONIZING
 - I MUST MAKE OTHERS' ENDS MY OWN.
 - THE ENDS OF A SUBJECT WHO IS END IN ITSELF
- WHAT IS HUMANITY?
 - IN PROMISING EXAMPLE, IT'S RATIONAL AGENCY.
 - IN BENEFICENCE EXAMPLE, IT'S SETTING ENDS.

FURTHER FORMULATIONS

- **KINGDOM OF ENDS FORMULATION:**

- **“A RATIONAL BEING BELONGS AS A MEMBER TO THE KINGDOM OF ENDS WHEN HE GIVES UNIVERSAL LAWS IN IT BUT IS ALSO HIMSELF SUBJECT TO THESE LAWS.” (NOT IN READER)**

- **AUTONOMY FORMULATION:**

- **“AUTONOMY OF THE WILL IS THE PROPERTY OF THE WILL BY WHICH IT IS A LAW TO ITSELF (INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY PROPERTY OF THE OBJECTS OF VOLITION)” (NOT IN READER)**

WHAT IS OF VALUE?

- **HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE**
 - **HAPPINESS IS THE SATISFACTION OF ALL DESIRES.**
 - **VIRTUE IS THE CAPACITY TO ACT MORALLY.**
- **HIGHEST GOOD SUBORDINATES HAPPINESS TO VIRTUE.**
 - **RATIONAL AGENCY/AUTONOMY IS MOST VALUABLE.**
 - **REASON (AND DUTY) HAS PRIORITY OVER DESIRES.**

KANT AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

- KANT DEVELOPS AN ETHICAL SYSTEM THAT
 - EMPHASIZES REASON AND RATIONAL AGENCY
 - IN CONTRAST WITH DESIRE SATISFACTION
 - EXPLAINS HOW DUTY IS A CENTRAL MORAL CONCEPT
 - IN CONTRAST WITH CONSEQUENCES
 - ARTICULATES DUTY AND ITS RELATION TO REASON
 - IN THE FORM OF THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE
 - PLACES AUTONOMY AND HUMANITY AT ITS CORE
 - MAN HAS A UNIQUE, INVIOLEABLE DIGNITY